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ABSTRACT

This document discusses the movement to bring original historical sources into the classroom. Because students of history need access to sources of information that provide direct or primary evidence about reality, teachers must show that realistic alternatives to the traditional history text exist. In the first section of this paper, efforts to make original sources available are traced to their origin in pamphlets distributed by the Old South Meeting House in Boston and based on a series of summer lectures delivered in 1883. The contributions of historians Edwin Doak Mead and Frederick Jackson Turner, who believed that the scholar's highest obligation in a democracy was to support and nourish public history education, is contrasted with the rift that set in later between history scholars and history teachers sometime in the 1930s. In the second section, the need to allow history teachers the freedom and time to seek out instructional materials and primary sources that emphasize themes and fill needs that these teachers have encountered in their classes is stressed. The third section illustrates the human and dramatic quality of literature in which ordinary people, especially young people, tell their own story, with examples of contemporary accounts of a young mother's survival of an Indian attack in Massachusetts in 1676, of a soldier in the American Revolution, and of a 92-year-old former slave woman. The paper suggests that such documents may illustrate different viewpoints and experiences, as well as the process of conflict and change in society. The fourth section lists different biographies and series of books that can be used. The fifth section suggests how changes can make primary source materials available. (DK)

HISTORICAL LITERATURE

AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

OCCASIONAL PAPER

National Council for History Education, Inc.

promoting history in school and society

HISTORICAL LITERATURE AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

by John Anthony Scott

Students of history need access to sources of information that provide direct or primary evidence about reality. Primary sources are those records that people in the past have *themselves* created. In each generation those who would learn about the past must go back to these records and examine them for themselves. This is not a privilege to be enjoyed merely by professional historians. Without access to primary evidence nobody can make contact with life as it has passed through time, nor become fully aware of the historically created community to which each of us belongs.

The universal use of history or social studies texts in the nation's schools contradicts this rule. Textbook writers usually put together their material by relying upon secondary sources. They tell of events which too often they have only read about in the works of others but which they themselves have not examined at first hand. The result is a dull, lifeless narrative. The history text may serve a purpose as a work of reference where one may check a fact, an event or a date. It is not easy to give such a book the title of literature. It fails to capture the drama of human existence or to mirror its joy and its pain. Because they dehumanize the story of humanity the texts stunt the intellectual and spiritual development of student and teachers alike. Daily contact with these books generates boredom rather than curiosity. The judgment of numberless Americans is summed up in six words: "I hated history in high school."

There is a developing consensus that these books are obsolete. Teachers are starting to say that it is time for the texts to go. But tradition, inertia, the educational establishment and the publishing industry itself are barriers to change. There is little point, therefore, in talking about replacing the texts unless we can show that realistic alternatives exist and are worth battling for. What will we put in the place of these books, and how will that be done? Exactly what is the heritage of historic literature that we wish to introduce into the classroom and where shall we find it? How from this mass of material shall we select offerings that will empower teachers to humanize their classroom presentation and to expand the depth and range of its scope?

I

In replacing the texts and generating a fresh historical literature for school use, we do not start from scratch. This is a fact that it is well to emphasize. The movement to bring original historical sources into the classroom goes back for more than one century; this tradition, furthermore, is being carried on today.

In 1883 The Old South Meeting House in Boston sponsored a series of summer lectures as part of its community and youth outreach. A pamphlet was prepared for each lecture and copies were distributed to the audience. This pamphlet literature provided listeners with the original sources upon which the lectures were based. At the end of the season the students brought their leaflets to the Old South Meeting House and had them bound for a small fee. Such was the beginning of the impressive documentary record that retains to the present day the title "Old South Leaflets."

The Old South Lectures for Young People, as they were called, soon became popular in Boston. They also served as a model for similar enterprises that were launched in other parts of the country. One such series conducted at Madison, Wisconsin, was even entitled "Old South Work" and used the seal of the Old South Meeting House on the materials that it published.

Edwin Doak Mead, well-known editor, lecturer and historian, initiated the Old South Work in Boston, and was director of this project from 1883 to 1909. During this 25 year period he selected and published a large body of historical literature. Each of his documentary exhibits provided a reprint of a manuscript, along with editorial commentary and bibliographical notes. His pamphlets soon won a reputation as a major resource for the history classroom. Universities, high schools and libraries across the country acquired their own sets. From these sets teachers chose the documents they wanted and then purchased as many copies as they could use. Before the series was discontinued in 1930 more than 200 pamphlets had been published.[1] What struck me when I first encountered these leaflets as a high school teacher during the 1960's was their variety. Topics ranged from George Washington's Farewell Address to the final words that John Brown spoke to the court in 1859; from Capt. John Smith's Description of New England to Abraham Lincoln's Cooper Institute Address in 1860; from Lord Chatham's majestic speeches on the American Revolution to Mercy Otis Warren's 'Observations on the New Constitution.'

The Old South Work continued in Boston for over fifty years before it came to an end in the late 1930's. It made a contribution to American public education the significance of which it is not easy to exaggerate. Paradoxically the very success of the venture brought it to a close. "There are so many source books [now] produced," wrote the Old South Work's director, Katharine Loring, in 1928, "that the Old South production seems unnecessary."[2]

Katharine Loring was right: source books reproducing historical documents began to proliferate in the period following World War I. After the end of World War II the stream turned into a torrent. But this creative work did not have the consequences that Loring anticipated. Mead, as a creator of the Old South tradition, believed that original source material – to paraphrase Francis Bacon – was "like muck: no good except it be spread." This 'spreading,' or mass popularization, did not occur. After World War II the publication of historical documents escalated at the very same time that a rift was developing between university and college historians on the one side and teaching historians in the high schools on the other. People like Edwin Doak Mead and Frederick Jackson Turner, who believed that the scholar's highest obligation in a democracy was to support and nourish public history education, became something of an anomaly in the profession. Most university historians became narrowly preoccupied with their own research and career interests.

Whatever the reasons for the chasm between history scholars and history teachers that now began to yawn - something which it is beyond the province of this article to explore - this rift nonetheless became a tragic reality. Indifference to public history education on the part of the scholars was matched by resentment and alienation on the part of the high school teachers. Documentary resources continued to accumulate in the stacks of the great university libraries, little seen or used. The youthful American public, to whom this heritage rightfully belonged, did not enjoy access to it.

Thus the tradition of introducing American young people to original historical sources was, after 1940, terminated. It has, to be sure, begun to be revived during the past quarter of a century. In the meantime the cause of living history as a central feature of American democratic education suffered a blow of incalculable proportions.[3]

II

When I began teaching United States history some time ago to high school juniors and seniors in New York City I tried one text after

another and ended up discarding them all. I began to look for documentary sources to take their place. I found these, first among the Old South leaflets, copies of which were on my classroom shelves; and then, as my appetite grew, in the recesses of the Columbia University Library. I duplicated these documents as I needed them and handed over piles of uncollated sheets to my students. The arrival of this new material was hailed as an event. The students took over, collated their copies, and went off to digest what they had won.

Some documents my students liked, others they did not. Classroom discussion of these sources generated a continuing dialogue between us. The students' preferences and needs were uppermost in my mind as I continued my search for historical literature to delight and educate them. In this process I learned as much as they did, perhaps more, as the following incident may indicate.

When I began teaching I had thought that it was important to pay attention to topflight statesmen like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. For many students the study of the lives and contributions of these men was interesting; but some of the young women among them lost no time in correcting my impression that it was enough. Great White American Males, they made it clear, left them cold. A different approach was evidently needed in order to arouse their curiosity about the American past.

One late afternoon, browsing through the Columbia stacks, I came upon a tattered, yellowing copy of Frances Anne Kemble's Journal of a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839. I read it with a sense of bewilderment. The book (or so it seemed to me) was a prose masterpiece that illuminated the condition of black and white women in American society, as well as the condition of the slaves themselves; yet it had been out of print since 1864. I photostated one chapter and passed it on to my students. This document caused a sensation. It now occurred to me that Kemble's book was an example of historical literature of the first rank; that all students, not just mine, ought to have access to it.

I took the book to Alfred Knopf and he agreed to publish it; the Knopf edition came out in 1961. Thirty years later (1991) it is still in print and available in paperback. This came about because I enjoyed the right to do my job in my own way, to study the needs of the students I was working for, and to experiment, with the help of a variety of materials, with varying approaches to the American past.[4]

Critics who have little faith in the intelligence and the commitment of our high school history teachers turn up their noses at this conclusion. "Maybe it worked for you," they say, "but for most of our teachers, this kind of thing is out of the question." My reaction would be, that we have a lot of fine people working in our schools; they are denied the right to teach as thinking, independent human beings, because of the intolerable burdens that have been piled upon them. It seems to me we need to establish a fundamental American right: the right to teach. How we may help the teachers a little in this respect will be indicated below (part IV).

During the 1970's I travelled around the country to visit and work with teachers seeking to revise their courses and curricula. I found that many high school historians were doing in their own fashion what I was trying to do in mine. We were trying as best we could, to find alternative materials for our history classes and to make end runs around the texts.

As a result of what I had seen I became a little complacent about the future. If every teacher, I thought, worked out his or her own solution to the textbook problem, all might be well.

The 1980's dispelled my easy optimism. During this decade the average high school teacher's load grew increasingly burdensome and, sometimes, intolerable. Many teachers, by this time, had all that they could do to survive, much less find the time to develop courses based upon original sources. The texts remained firmly entrenched in the educational system. Students by the millions continued to be cheated of their cultural heritage. The damage is probably irreparable, for education postponed is education denied.

III

With the arrival of the 1990's it seems to me that the education community needs to confront the textbook issue afresh and to provide a new initiative for the introduction of the historical literature that we need. The urgency of this task is underlined by the vividness and humanity of original sources when contrasted with the dry passionless quality of the average text.

Throughout their history the American people have shown themselves capable of telling their own story and of telling it supremely well. What they have recorded constitutes a marvelous resource for the classroom teacher to draw upon. The human and dramatic quality of this type of literature, in its infinite variety, may be illustrated with a few brief examples from the historical record created by ordinary people, and by young people in particular. Historical literature of this type has the capacity to bring the past instantly to life. It is for this reason that it, and not the text, ought to lie at the heart of historical studies for millions of American youth.[5]

It is the morning of a freezing winter's day, February 10, 1676. A band of Nipmuck Indians is attacking the village of Lancaster, Massachusetts, in one of many encounters between Native Americans and colonists during King Philip's War. Mary Rowlandson, the village minister's young wife, tells of the experience. "Now," she writes,

"the dreadful hour is come that I have often heard of, but now mine own eyes see it. Some in our house were fighting for their lives, others wallowing in their blood, the house on fire over our heads. I took my children to go forth, but as soon as we came to the door, the Indians shot so thick that the bullets rattled against the house, so that we must go back."

Mary was taken prisoner with her six-year-old daughter, who had been wounded in the attack and was dying. The Indians placed the child upon a horse and, Mary tells us, "It went moaning along 'I shall die! I shall die!' I went on foot after it with a sorrow that cannot be expressed."

The Nipmucks fled through the snow-covered forest with the New England militia hard upon their heels. Rowlandson provides a vivid picture of the Nipmuck people as they fled: "Old and young, some sick, some lame, many with papooses on their backs. The greatest number with us were squaws, and they travelled with all they had, bag and baggage." All were suffering the pangs of hunger, for the whites had sought out and destroyed their corn supplies. Their food, Rowlandson tells us, was " groundnuts, acorns, artichokes, lily roots, onions, horses' guts, all sorts of wild birds...bear, beaver, tortoises, frogs, squirrels, skunks, rattlesnakes, yea, the very bark off the trees."

Here one hundred years later, is a tiny episode from the war of the Revolution as told by a British soldier, Roger Lamb. The scene is Saratoga, New York, October 17, 1777, just after the British surrender following the battle of Stillwater. The British troops are stationed on one side of the Hudson River and the Americans on the other. The river being neither wide nor deep, the troops hail each other and talk together. Suddenly, wrote Sgt. Lamb, a British soldier

"darted like lightning from his companions and plunged into the stream. At the very same moment, one of the American soldiers,...dashed into the water from the opposite shore;...and they hung on each others' necks and wept: and the loud cries of 'My brother! My dear brother!!'...soon cleared up the mystery."

One of the brothers had emigrated to the colonies, while the other had remained in his native land. They were, said Lamb, "ignorant until that hour that they were engaged in hostile combat against each other's life."

The episode suggests intriguing questions for discussion. Is it worse for brother to kill brother than for any person to kill another person? If all men are brothers, why do brothers fight?

83 years later, in 1860, we have the drama of a confrontation between a young slave woman and a slaveowner. Delicia Patterson, 92 years of age and a freedperson, told her story in 1937: "I was born," she said,

"in Boonville, Missouri, on January 2, 1845. I was owned by Charles Mitchell until I was fifteen. They were fairly nice to all of their slaves and they had several of us. When I was fifteen years old, I was brought to the courthouse to be sold. Old Judge Miller from my county was there. I knew him well because he was one of the wealthiest slave owners in the county, and the meanest one. He was so cruel all the slaves and many owners hated him because of it. He saw me on the block for sale, and he knew I was a good worker. So when he bid for me, I spoke right out on the auction block and I told him:

[She half rises in her chair, lifts her hand, and points a finger toward the crowd of bidders. Her voice, raised in anger, changes past into present:]

'Old Judge Miller, don't you bid for me, 'cause if you do, I would not live on your plantation. I will take a knife and cut my throat from ear to ear before I would be owned by you.'"

We move into the 20th century. The United States, in the throes of a mammoth industrial transformation, is emerging as a world power. Hundreds of little boys are working deep below ground in the mines of West Virginia and Pennsylvania. John Spargo, an immigrant who had himself worked as

a child in the mines of his native England, describes the scene:

"Think of what it means to be a trap boy at ten years of age. It means to sit alone in a dark mine passage hour after hour,...to see no living creature except the mules as they pass with their loads, or a rat or two seeking to share one's meal; to stand in water or mud that covers the ankles, chilled to the marrow by the cold draughts that rush in when you open the trapdoor for the mules to pass through; to work for fourteen hours – waiting –opening and shutting a door – then waiting again – for sixty cents; to reach the surface when all is wrapped in the mantle of night...."

Such sources introduce students to the wonders of the American past, empowering them to possess it as their own. Validating the past as something real, intensely alive, and profoundly human, arouses curiosity. Such curiosity, in turn, generates an emotional commitment that is the first condition of disciplined work.

What criteria might guide the teacher in selecting these materials? Obviously enough we need to choose pieces suited to the students' reading level and to the time to be allotted for assignments. Here the documents themselves present few difficulties. They are of varying lengths; within a given piece there are portions that have their own internal unity and coherence, and may even be used as independent assignments. A great deal of flexibility is thus possible in selecting classroom readings.

The same is true of content. We may use different viewpoints on one given problem or event. We may choose individual descriptions that allow the student to enter into the situation as though he or she were there – on the battlefield or sailing ship, at camp meeting or in a courthouse, in the mines, the gardens or fields, on the trail or in the woods.

We may also use documents that set forth concepts illuminating the process of conflict and change in society. A good example of this kind of 'conceptual' document is William Lloyd Garrison's address in the Park Street Church, Boston, on July 4, 1829. On that occasion Garrison set forth for the first time in American history the concept that people of color were citizens of the United States, entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the rights and liberties guaranteed by the United States constitution. Documents of this kind introduce a theme - the struggle for human rights - that is central to American history from first to last.

IV

Textbooks have traditionally provided students with an overview of the American past. How, it is asked, will students get the 'big picture' if there are no texts to help them? How will they be able to put it all together? Surely, the critics suggest, the documentary approach, praiseworthy though it may be in principle, will leave students holding only the colorful fragments of a jigsaw puzzle.

Certainly a narrative framework is indispensable for the study of history; no coherent organization of the story is possible without it. But texts do not have a monopoly of narrative form, and the narratives they have to offer are certainly not the best. The historical literature that we have in mind provides narrative of quite a different kind. This type of narrative weaves original sources into the story itself from beginning to end. The task of the narrator or historian is to unfold a bare outline; testimony from the past is drawn upon to describe, humanize, and illuminate the theme. Such narratives make history come alive; they enrich it with the sound of not one but many voices.

Narrative of this type we may call 'epic,' for want of a better word. It is inspired by models from the western and the Native American literary tradition – by epics like **Beowulf**, by the Icelandic sagas and by Native American legends like the Zuni creation myths.

Epic narratives, as we see them, serve a quite different classroom purpose than the conventional texts. The textbook's aim is 'coverage,' that is to say, an almost encyclopedic comprehensiveness. From the historian's viewpoint this is one of the text's big weaknesses. When you emphasize everything you emphasize nothing; the 'big picture' remains a big blur. Epic narrative, on the other hand, aims not so much at 'coverage' as at communication; this, in the classroom, is everything. The teacher and the writer here share a common aim: to fire the student's imagination as he or she contemplates struggles that have unfolded in the past. Epic narrative also aims to provide a model so that students may not only learn but, in the course of time, create; *may begin, that is, to try to put together their own vision of the past.*

American historians have already embarked upon writing and publishing the kind of narratives that we are referring to, primarily in the American history field. Alfred A. Knopf broke ground with this approach in the 1960's when he launched the **Living History Library** series for a young adult audience: fifteen volumes were in circulation by 1976. These books were an experiment in historical narrative as an art form; they covered the entire span of United States history from colonial times until the New Deal. Most of these books were written by teaching historians; one, on the American age of sail (1815-60) was written by two folklorists; one, on the Tennessee Valley Authority, by an environmentalist.[6]

The people who produced the **Living History Library** books were associates of the Committee on History in the Classroom. The Committee was launched formally at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in 1970, and it affiliated with AHA four years later. The group was composed of historians troubled by the indifference of the historical profession to public history education and the possibly catastrophic consequences of this neglect. These people came together in order to find ways to diminish the gap between historians at college and high school levels; and to encourage teaching and writing that would help to check the discipline's deteriorating status in the nation's classrooms. The Committee, whose membership never at any time exceeded two hundred, was committed to keeping alive, in a difficult time, the tradition of public and democratic history education which people like Edwin Mead had so ably pioneered.

The first book prepared for this series was written by James M. McPherson and published in 1967 (**Marching Toward Freedom: The Negro in the Civil War 1861-65**). The last of the series was written by Laurence I. Seidman and was published in 1976 (**The Fools of '49: The California Gold Rush 1848-56**). Seidman then launched upon a new venture, the establishment of a center for the dissemination of source materials, that will be dealt with in Part V below.[7]

One of the best ways to bring epic narrative of the kind that we are talking about into the history classroom is through biography. Most people who are the subjects of biography are deeply involved in the life of their own times. The biographer in order to tell their story, must of necessity develop the historical context of these people's lives; must recreate the social environment in which the subject lived and with which he or she interacted. Biography, therefore, is an art form made to order for presenting history as actually seen and experienced by a single human being and his closest associates.

Today Committee on History in the Classroom historians are writing biographies as well as other types of epic narrative. In 1986, in collaboration with Facts on File, we launched **The Makers of America** series. The aim of the series is to help fill the gaps on the library shelves where biographies for high school juniors and seniors ought to be, but are not. These books interweave original sources into the fabric of the narrative throughout. By the end of 1992 as many as fifteen biographies in this series will be available to young adult readers.[8]

Among the first of these biographies to be published was Lilly Patterson's **Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Freedom Struggle**. The book, as the title implies, introduces the reader both to the man and to the civil rights struggle in which he played so central a role. In 1989 Patterson (a black writer) won with this study the American Library Association's Coretta Scott King Award; this is presented every year for a distinguished contribution to educational literature in the field of African-American life and history. The use of original sources (oral as well as written) endow Ms. Patterson's book with great vitality; this is no small part the secret of her success.

It remains to consider the broadest and most general type of epic narrative – the story of the United States itself. A few years ago the National Geographic Society assembled a group of historians, geographers and artists to prepare **The Story of America**, an illustrated historical atlas with accompanying text. This was an interesting experiment in the creation of an history epic which I was invited to participate in. Not the least remarkable feature of this atlas was the mural that went with it: a five foot long mural by a Puerto Rican artist illustrating the vision of history that the book embodied.[9]

Works such as **The Story of America** certainly convey much factual detail. More than that, they arouse wonder and curiosity about the historical process. The readers are invited to view a panorama. They may discern the tides that run, the patterns that change. All of us, it may be, should be nurtured upon such epics from the cradle to the grave. If this ever happens we will need no pallid texts to provide us with 'the big picture.'

V

How is the movement for historical literature in the schools to be given direction and thrust?

One way is to set up a number of centers throughout the country, preferably based upon universities, with access to first-rate library resources. This suggestion arises out of existing experience, and two examples may be cited: The National Center for History in the Schools, and *Folk Song in the Classroom.*

The National Center for History in the Schools is a federally funded venture based upon the University of California at Los Angeles and conducted in close connection with the National Council for History Education. The Center conducts summer institutes and workshops for teachers and has launched a program to create innovative teaching materials and distribute them to the schools: notably fifty units of varying lengths that include excerpts from primary sources and lesson plans. Some of these units are devoted to world history and some to American. While a few have been prepared for senior high school classes, the majority are designed for grades 1 through 10. Director and Associate Director of the Center are Charlotte Crabtree and Gary Nash respectively of UCLA. Of recent years Professor Nash has participated in the publication of a number of history texts. The Center's aim is not so much to replace the textbook as to provide additional resources with which to enrich it.

Folk Song in the Classroom is a more modest effort to provide historical sources for elementary and high school history teachers. An offshoot of the Committee for History in the Classroom it was launched in 1979 at the suggestion of a group of high school teachers who met with Laurence Seidman and myself at a seminar in Oregon. A thirty-page Newsletter is published three times a year and distributed to 1500 elementary and high school teachers throughout the country.

The Newsletter is devoted to the reproduction of the music and lyrics of folk songs which the people of this country have created and sung throughou. its history. These songs constitute a special type of original source material which, as teachers are beginning to realize, is of incomparable value for introducing young people both to their history and to their cultural heritage. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the average teacher to have easy access to many of these songs. Over the past decade the Newsletter has provided the music and lyrics of three hundred songs, together with historical background, commentary and suggestions for classroom use. Our funds have permitted only a limited amount of personal follow-up; Seidman and I have done what we can by visiting various parts of the country and conducting seminars with teachers. The work of the center has been based upon the folk song archive which we have established; it has also received indispensable administrative assistance from Post College. John W. Scott, a high school history teacher at the Central School of Commerce, Springfield, Massachusetts, has now joined the editorial group.

Additional centers such as these, but organized upon a regional basis, are much to be desired. Properly staffed they will be able to give intensive attention to the needs of the teachers whose area they have been set up to serve. These centers might prepare, edit and distribute documentary series. Teachers could then choose what they wished and xerox their selections. The centers might also conduct seminars in the classroom use of original sources. They could, in addition, institute their own youth archives from the writings of young people that were submitted to them. The stories of the experiences of Asian, Caribbean and Latin American young people who have recently immigrated to this country ought surely to find a permanent place in the nation's records.

Such centers, coordinating their activities and also working independently, could rapidly enrich the sum total of historical literature available to the classroom teacher. Backed by state and federal funds and by the schools' own resources, they should enable the high school history teacher 'to do the most with the least' – to provide the students of this country with a first-rate history education at less than the sum which the taxpayer now pays out yearly for texts.

Another step to be taken to give impetus to the movement for first-rate history in the schools is to reach out to parents and teachers and try to involve them in an ongoing conversation about texts and the alternatives. The public is in a receptive mood: its disillusionment with the older modes of history instruction has been fueled by the collapse in 1989-90 of the cold war with the Soviet Union. History rushes on at breakneck speed; the texts are now obsolescent on the very day of publication. The implications of the events of 1989-90 in this respect are startling. They may require a rewriting of United States history in the 20th century. Old texts, ironically, may be preserved as a source for the study of the mindset of a whole generation of Cold Warriors.

Individual teachers will be able to make a contribution to the debate if they speak from their own experience and their own classroom experimentation. It may not be too soon to come together and exchange ideas – perhaps even to publish a newsletter dealing with original sources: what they are, where to find them and how to use them in the classroom.

This debate may also be enriched by the contributions of teachers who hitherto have relied minimally upon original sources in their classes, but who now might like to try their hands at it. What'll we do on Monday morning? they may ask us.

Here we can simply offer what (we hope) are commonsense suggestions. Launch your project with just one of your classes, not all five; and select a topic that will give you an easy opportunity to introduce a document. When we begin the study of slavery, for example, it is inevitable that we will want to offer the testimony of slaves – and who here is more eloquent than Frederick Douglass or Delicia Patterson? Look around in your school and local library for appropriate material. Choose something short – *it doesn't matter how short* – and eloquent, gracefully written, moving. Make xeroxes and hand them out when the time is right. Be careful to explain the context: that is, who is speaking, under what conditions, and why. Then read your chosen piece out loud: it is impossible to overemphasize, what many teachers already know so well, the value of bringing the *sound* of the past into your classes.

When you begin with this approach, it may take time for your students to get used to it. If they do not react, put the source on one side and go on with your lesson. In time you will elicit reactions and discussions, you will be able to provide longer readings, and the students will take these home as assignments. Guided by failures, successes and student reactions, you will gradually accumulate a file and , with it, experience. We may dream of summer seminars where we will help each other put together fresh materials for our courses, such as the National Center for History in the Schools has already begun to hold. And, who knows, we may discuss how to go about writing epics.

May, 1991

1. Many of these are no longer available, but the Old South Meeting House has kept some of them in print. A listing is obtainable from the Old South Association Leaflet Committee, 310 Washington Street, Boston, MA 12108.

2. to George Wolkins, quoted in *Old South Leaflets* a publication of the Old South Association Leaflet Committee (n.d.).

3. The extent, nature and quality of documentary publication since the 1930's is beyond the scope of the present article. It will be the subject of a second article that I am presently planning.

4. Frances Anne Kemble, **Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839**, edited with an introduction by John Anthony Scott. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1984.

5. The pedagogy of historical sources – how you utilize them in the classroom – is a question by itself. It merits an article or even a book of its own, and will not be explored here.

6. **The Living History Library** books covered such topics as the American Revolution (1763-1783), the Early National period (two books, 1783-1814), the Age of Jackson (1815-1850), the Civil War (1861-1865), the Labor Movement (1870-1917), the West (1870-1890), World War I (1914-1919), the Depression (two books, 1929-1939) etc.

7. **The Living History Library** books went out of print in the 1980's; they are currently being reissued by Facts on File in its **Library of American History** series.

8. The subjects, selected from three centuries of American history, included African-Americans, Native Americans and whites. Among them are Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Jane Addams, William Penn, A. Philip Randolph, Frederick Douglass, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perces, John Brown, Robert Gould Shaw, Amelia Earhart and General Douglas MacArthur.

9. **The Story of America: A National Geographic Picture Atlas.** Washington, D.C.: The National Geographic Society, 1984. The Society sold hundreds of thousands of copies of this book to parents, libraries and American history teachers at high school and elementary level.

NCHE founding member John Anthony Scott is co-chair of the Committee on History in the Classroom and was chairman of the department of history of the Ethical Culture Schools in New York until 1967 and subsequently taught at the Rutgers University School of Law.√